

POLICY / COMMUNITY AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

November 7, 2011

Oliver Administration Building

Present

Subcommittee: Denise Arsenault, Chair, Karen Lynch and Susan Rancourt

School Committee and Administration: William O'Dell (5:35), Paul Silva (5:40), John Bento (5:50), Melinda Thies and Mario Andrade

Denise Arsenault called the meeting to order at 5:32 PM.

Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Karen Lynch motioned to approve the minutes to the October 3, 2011 meeting; Susan Rancourt seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 3 to 0.

MOTION: Susan Rancourt motioned to approve the minutes to the June 6, 2011 meeting; Karen Lynch seconded. After discussion on the brevity of the minutes they were deemed appropriate and acceptable. The motion passed unanimously.

New Legislation Re: Compulsory Attendance

Denise Arsenault contacted Andy Andrade, an adviser to the Commissioner, about the implications of the new law that changes

the compulsory attendance age from 16 to 18. Although we are the first to raise concerns, Andy made it clear the intent of the legislation is not to create an unfunded mandate, but to reduce the dropout rate utilizing the programs we have in place. There has not been much conversation state-wide; New Hampshire has this law. Andy will be contacting Tim Duffy of RIASC.

Comments/questions

- What are we bound to in terms of proficiency?**
- It appears that alternate opportunities should be extended to students but resources are not identified; much more planning is needed.**
- What about NECAP testing?**
- What about PBGRs?**
- What about quality control?**
- What about GED – will those students still be considered dropouts; are districts responsible for payment of the testing fees; the State reduced grant funding to RIRAL (provider of GED classes and testing) by \$80,000.**
- Under the new funding formula, the money follows the student.**
- Can we coordinate with Roger Williams University for alternatives?**
- At risk students—although we attempt to identify such students, it is now recommended this begin in 6th grade.**
- Concern that our offerings may have to be ramped up to accommodate the older student.**
- Possibilities: virtual learning**

- **What about rigor? Will the outcome be equivalent to a Mt. Hope diploma?**
- **NECAP testing in the junior year and portfolios will still be required.**
- **Career and Technology—although the quality of career and tech education is not strong, Mario will research funding possibilities.**
- **KMS SIT has proposed quarterly credit recovery programs for disenfranchised students, providing early support for students before falling behind too far to recover.**

Melinda is interested in moving forward with internships and apprenticeships as an alternative pathway to a diploma, first assuring proficiency in literacy and numeracy, then exposing students to the work force; Melinda will confer with high school administration, research other states' methods, seek guidance from the Commissioner on PBGRs and report back to the Subcommittee at their next meeting.

After discussion of the actual changes in the law, it appears that under certain circumstances, students can still drop out at the age of 16, but we must try to retain these students and provide them an alternative path to a diploma.

Affected Policies

Policies JEA Compulsory Attendance Ages and JEB Entrance Age can logically be combined. Susan Rancourt will draft a revision which will be discussed at the next meeting with a recommendation

to be forwarded to the full Committee.

Next Meeting

December 6, 2011 – Teacher Evaluation Policy; Compulsory Attendance Policies

Adjournment

MOTION: At 6:31 PM Karen Lynch motioned to adjourn; Susan Rancourt seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

/ca